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TIM HOLT

May 29

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TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

AS BLACK AS THE HEART OF MID-NIGHT WITH A JET MASK COVERING HIS EVIL FEATURES, THE BLACK DOMINO RODE INTO THE BULLET COUNTRY! HIS GOAL WAS ROBBERY AND MURDER—AND HIS FIRST VICTIM WAS TIM HOLT! AND WHEN TIM HOLT DIED FROM AN ASSASSIN'S BULLET, REDMASK TOOK UP THE DEER TAIL OF THIS COLEL ARCH-DESPERADO, AND IT WAS—

'REDMASK
VS.
THE BLACK DOMINO!'



WILD BILL
HICKOCK



BILLY
TILGHMAN



REDMASK



TIM HOLT



WYATT EARP



DOC
HOLLIDAY

THIS IS THE MAN KNOWN ONLY AS THE BLACK DOMINO! GRIM AND CRUEL, HIS HEART IS AS DARK AS THE CLOTHES HE WEARS.



ON THE WALLS OF HIS OUTLAW HIDEOUT HANG CLAY MASKS—LIFE-SIZE AND PAINTED—FOR THESE ARE THE MEN THE BLACK DOMINO HAS BRANDED FOR DEATH...



TIM HOLT

THE TROUBLE WITH MOST
OUTLAW BANDS IS—THEY HAVE
NO ORGANIZATION! THEY KILL
AND ROB—WITHOUT A PLAN!
BUT I HAVE A PLAN!



THE FIRST PART OF THIS
PLAN IS TO GET AHEAD OF THE
LAW OFFICERS IN ANY
COMMUNITY WE HAVE
SELECTED FOR OUR CRIMES!
THE LAW OFFICE IN
THIS COMMUNITY IS
TIM HOLT! TELL HIM!



NEXT DAY, IN THE SILVER
HORSE SALOON IN THE
TOWN OF BULLET...

I ASKED THAT
WHEN YOU TALK
ABOUT A STRANGER
FRIEND—CALDWY!

TAKE YOUR
PITY!
HAS OFFER
ME!



I'LL TEACH YOU TO
POKE
FUN AT ME!



THE SOUND AND FURY OF THE FIGHTING SPREADS
LIKE WILDFIRE! SOON, HALF THE SALOON DRUPTS
WITH SMASHING FISTS!



THROW ME ACROSS THE
TABLE, WILL YOU?

ON THE STREET OUTSIDE...

THERE'S ALL AGES TO PAY AT THE SILVER
PRINCESS, TIM! REGULAR FEE FOR ALL!



AS TIM HOLT THRUSTS IN THROUGH THE BATHING
DOORS, A COIT SINGIN STAYED ON HIM AN
INSTANT LATER.



TIM HOLT



LIKE WATER SLIPPING AWAY THROUGH SAND, ONE BY ONE THE BLACK DOWNS' OUTLAWS SLIP FROM THE SALOON...



HUSHED SILENCE FALLS ACROSS THE MAIN STREET!

AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE, MOMENTS LATER

IN THE OUTLAW HIDEOUT, SOME HOURS AFTERWARD—



TIM HOLT

GUNS, ROAD IN THE NIGHT, AND
WELLS-FARGO SAFETY MEN LOOSED



TRAIN ARE STOPPED BY
STEWERS ROVED ACROSS
THE TRACKS



IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE AT BALET—



THAT NIGHT, AS THE MOON RISES HIGH ABOVE THE JAGGED PEAKS OF THE SIFUAW RANGE...



SECONDS LATER, A TATTOO OF GURCHOTS FALLS THE NIGHT



LIKE A GRIM SHADOW OF THE NIGHT REDMASK HURTLES INTO THE BLACK DOWING DESPERADORS!



A GUN BARREL FLASHES LIKE A SILVER STEAK, LANDING HARD AGAINST AN OUTLAW'S JAW—



THE HOLT



"DROP THE S&S, HOMBERS!"



"I'LL GET REDMASK FOR YOU! THEN—WITH HOLT AND HIM DEAD—THERE'LL BE NOBODY TO STOP ME!"

THE STARTLED STAGGLED HORSES SCURT, LUNGE—AND BOLT!—AND DALLING AWAY FROM THE BLACK DOWNS' BULLETS—REDMASK PROPS UNDER THEIR THROTTING HOOF!



WITH A DESPERATE TWIST OF HIS POWERFUL BODY REDMASK CLUTCHES THE SWAYING TRACES! PULLS HURRIEDLY UPWARD, HOOKS A LEG OVER THE WOODEN TONGUE—



A HALE DOWN THE TRAIL, REDMASK GRABS THE ROARING STAGE HORSES TO A HALT



"COULDN'T STOP THOSE OWLHOOTS FROM GETTING AWAY WITH SOME OF THEIR LOOT— BUT I MANAGED TO PREVENT THEIR TAKING ALL THE CASH THE COACH WAS CARRYING"



"REIN UP, BOYS! WE COULD GO AFTER REDMASK AND MAKE SURE HE'S DEAD— BUT THE POLICE WE MAKE MIGHT BRING HONEST BANCHERS DOWN ON US! I'VE A BETTER PLAN!"

SOME DAYS LATER, IN BALLET, AT THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF GAGE



"THAT'S RIGHT, SHERIFF! THE BLACK DOWNS AND HIS GANG ROBBED THE UNION PACIFIC— WITH REDMASK LEADING THEM!"

"GOSHAWK! THEY MUST'VE COMED FOREVER BEFORE I GOT TO ROUND UP A POSSE!"

TIM HOLT

SOME HOURS LATER, IN THE HILLS...



AT THE OUTLAW HIDEOUT...



THE POOL I TOLD HIM TO STAY
WITH THE MEN WHEN THEY
ROBBER THAT BANK IN SILVER
CITY! TO LET POLICE SEE HIM
AS BEDMARK—SO THE LAW
ITSELF WILL GET BEHIND HIM
FOR US!



AND SO, WHEN THE POSSE ARRIVED AT THE OUTLAW HIDEOUT...



TIM HOLT

JUST A LITTLE BLACK BOX BURIED SOMEWHERE WEST OF BALD ROCK—BUT IT COST THE LIVES OF TEN MEN—IT BROUGHT A LEAD-JACKETED BULLET THRODDING INTO KERNAN'S CHEST—AND IT SPILLED A FORTUNE IN GREENBACKS OVER THE DESERT SANDS!

FOR KERNAN KIDS A BLOOD TRAIL WITH A FISTY DRACONAL GIRL TO FIND—

"OUTLAW GOLD!"



ON A DESERT TRAIL, A GIRL LASHES WILDLY AT HER GALLOPING HORSES—



PLEASE, OH PLEASE—
RUN FASTER!

HALF A MILE AWAY, SIX HARD-FACED MEMBERS OF NOTORIOUS "BUTCH CASSIDY'S WILD BUNCH" SPUR THEIR BRONCS FORWARD—



HERE SHE
COMES!

PUMP HER FULL OF LEAD! PAY
HER BACK FOR WHAT SHE
DID TO US!



LESS THAN A MILE AWAY HIDDEN FROM THE WILD BUNCH BY A TONGUE OF ROCK —



WITH THROATS PUMPING AND SUN-BREAST FLARING FOR HOLT ROCKETS INTO THE MANGLED GUNNER WITH THE PURY OF A CANNONBALL!





IN THE TOWN OF BULLY TOWARD SUNDOWN, CHITO MAKES AN UNCOMFORTABLE PROMISE...



TIM HOLT

THEY WENT AS THE PURPLE SHADOES OF THE DESERT SUNSET BEHIND.



AND NOW I'LL
SING SOME RECENT
NEW YORK FAVORITES.
I'VE BROUGHT
WITH ME...

AFTER HER SONGS—

YOU CAN'T! CHITO SENT YOU!
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU—
BECAUSE YOU CAN HELP ME
GET THE MONEY MY FATHER
BURIED YEARS AGO— OUT ON
THE DESERT!



HERE'S HIS MAP! NEED THOSE
MEN WERE AFTER ME TODAY TO
GET THIS MAP! MY FATHER
BURIED CLOSE TO TWO HUNDRED
THOUSAND DOLLARS—SOMEWHERE
WEST OF BALD ROCK!



SORRY, MARY! YOU NEED
A LAWYER, LIKE A SHERIFF
OR A MARSHAL! THEY'LL
BE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO
PROTECT YOU, AND
ESCORT YOU TO BALD
ROCK!



AND! MEN LIKE THAT WOULDN'T
HAVE A CHANCE AGAINST THOSE
MEN THAT WERE AFTER ME
TODAY! THEY'RE MEMBERS
OF THE OLD MONEY—THE
OUTLAW KILLERS
THAT RODE WITH
BUTCH CASSIDY!

JUST THE
SAME—



MARY—LOOK OUT!



SAW HIS GUN-BARREL
GLEAM IN THE LIGHT!
KNEW AN HONEST MAN
WOULD WIDE OUT IN
THE DARK LIKE THAT—



TIM HOLT



NEXT MORNING, AT SUNUP...



RIDING BEHIND THEM...



TIM HOLT

FROM TIME TO TIME, AS THEY MOVE ACROSS THE PEAKS, EDWARD STOPS AND LOOKS OUT ACROSS THE HORIZON.



AS THE WILD BUNCH CLIFFERS THROUGH MIDDLE-EYE CANYON...



LATER, AT THE END OF THE TRAIL...



SOME MILES FURTHER ON, EDWARD'S LABRAT SHAKES OUT AND DOWN—



AS THE SUN SINKS BELOW THE BITTER RANGE



TIM HOLT

ONE HOUR AFTER SUNDOWN—



I'VE STRUCK SOMETHING!

IT'S THE BOX! I KNOW IT IS!



IT IS THE BOX! I'VE TAKEN IT!

WELL—HURRY AND GO HOME...!



YOU'VE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE REWARD! YOU BROUGHT ME TO THE BLACK BOX! YOU'VE DEVEN OF THE WILD BEACH! I DON'T NEED YOU ANY MORE REWARD!



THE LOOT OF BUTCH CANNON'S ROBERTS—NOW IT'S MINE! HE GAVE ME THE MAP—AND TOLD ME HOW ABOUT ME! HE DIED WITH A JOKE ON HIS LIPS—KNOWING THEY'D TRY TO KILL ME! BUT THANKS TO REWARD—THEY DIDN'T!

AS THE POUNDING HOOFBEATS DIE AWAY...



LUCKY FOR ME! BEHOLD THE REWARD DOUBLED! KNOWING THAT BUTCH CANNON HAD A GIRL FRIEND I PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER—AND REALIZED THAT THE GIRL FRIEND WAS DELLA MARTINI! SO WHILE SHE SLEPT LAST NIGHT I SHOOT-LOADED THE BULLETS IN HER GUN!



WITH ONLY A FEW GRAMS OF POWDER LEFT, THE BULLETS DID MOST AT ME AND JUST ENOUGH POWDER TO REACH ME... NOW I'LL WANT MORE—SHALL BE BACK!

THREE HOURS LATER



YOU—YOU—THIS BLACK BOX IS EMPTY!

SURE! WHILE YOU SLEPT LAST NIGHT I DROD IT UP TOOK OUT THE MONEY AND REPLACED THE BOX! I BELIEVED YOU AT FIRST—BUT THOSE CHILHOOTS I CAPTURED TOLD THE TRUTH! THE MACHIN IS THE BOX WAS THE LOOT OF BUTCH CANNON'S ROBERTS—AND WILL GO BACK TO THE PEOPLE FROM WHOM IT WAS STOLEN!

THE END



IT STARTED WITH WHISPERS — A BAND OF SHADOWNY FIGURES UNUSUALLY ADDRESS'ED BY THEIR MASKED LEADER — IT ENDED WITH THUNDEROUS ROARS AND EXPLOSIONS — METEORS STREAKING THROUGH THE SKIES, AND THE EARTH SPLITTING!...

BUT THE GHOST RIDER WAS THERE AND THAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE —

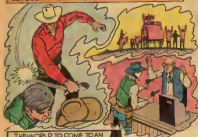
'THE NIGHT THE WORLD ENDED!'

THE GOOD FOLKS IN THE TERRITORY WOULDN'T BE SLEEPING SO SOUNDLY IF THEY KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN SLEEPER CEMETERY!

THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN WHO CAN MAKE THE WORLD END THE WAY WE NEED IT TO — AND HE'LL CHARGE PLENTY OF MONEY!



IS IT BY COINCIDENCE THAT THE TERRITORY BREAKS OUT SOON AFTERWARDS IN A RASH OF CRIME?



I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU... YOUR TELEGRAM CAME YESTERDAY.



IS IT BY ANOTHER COINCIDENCE THAT - A MONTH LATER - A CERTAIN MAN TRAVELS TO AN EASTERN CITY WITH "PLENTY OF MONEY" IN HIS WALLET - ?

THEY WOULD COME TO AN END... AMMA... FOR THE GUM YOU HAVE MENTIONED, IT CAN BE ARRANGED... I'LL LEAVE FOR YOUR TERRITORY TOMORROW!



BACK WEST, ONE WEEK LATER, THE WEALTHIEST MEN IN THE TERRITORY SIT SPELLBOUND -



GENTLEMEN - I, DR. METTROZINI, WILL STATE MY WORLD-WIDE REPUTATION THAT WHAT I HAVE TOLD YOU WERE, TONIGHT A SCIENTIFIC FACT. NOW LOOK DEEP INTO MY EYES AND TELL YOU AGAIN...



THIS LOCALITY WILL BE HIT BY THE PLANET MARS TOMORROW AT MIDNIGHT! THE EARTH WILL SPLIT, AND THERE WILL BE MUCH FIRE - EVERYTHING, EVERYONE WILL BURN! I OFFER YOU NEW REFUGE IN MY SHELTER FOR A SMALL FEE PAYABLE AFTER THE CATASTROPHE!



I NOW SEE IT NOW - IT'LL BE THE END OF THE WORLD!

SOUNDS LIKE HOSWASH TO ME...



AS ALL EYES ARE
DIVERGED BY A
SUDDEN LEAP AND
A RESOUNDING
VOICE, TWO
CURVING HANDS
SEAL THE SKEPTIC'S
MOUTH...

YOU ALL KNOW ME —
JEREMIAH LOFT, EDITOR
OF THIS TERRITORY'S FIRST
NEWSPAPER. WELL, I'M
CONVINCED—AND I MAKE A
MOTION THAT WE AS A
GROUP ACCEPT THE
DOCTOR'S OFFER. ALL
THOSE IN FAVOR—
RAISE YOUR HANDS!



OUTSIDE IN THE ALLEY,
THERE ARE SOME
PAUSED HANDS THAT
JEREMIAH LOFT
CANNOT SEE...

TRYIN' TUN BREAK
UP THE DOC'S LECTURE,
HUH? TAKE THAT!

UHUUH!



BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHO
REGARD THE FEDERAL MARSHAL'S
SUDDEN RETURN WITH GRIM
DISFASTE!

GET MOVING—FAST! A DEAD
REX FURY WON'T BE ABLE TO
DO ANY SHOOPING AROUND...

FAST,
THE BOSS
SAYD THIS
GONNA BE THE
FASTEST
ONE YET...



A CLEAR
MAJORITY,
GENTLEMEN!

WHAT
ABOUT
OUR
GOLD
IN
CUBA?

SPRING ALL
WILDMAN'S
WITH YOU!
EVERYTHING
EVERYONE
LEFT BEHIND
WILL BE
DESTROYED...
AT MIDNIGHT,
TOMORROW...



A DAY PASSES... THERE ARE FIVE
SHORT HOURS LEFT BEFORE THE
"DISASTER" STRIKES... AND REX
FURY RETURNS TO TOWN AFTER
A LONG TRIP!

WAL, EF IT AINT
REX FURY! BLAD
TUN GEE YUH,
MARSHAL...



A FEW
MINUTES
LATER—

NOW WHEN FURY COMES
STOMPIN' IN, THE GUN
WILL TRIGGER—OFF AN
VENTILATE HIM PROPER!
BUT I BETTER GET OUT
THE WINDOW—FURY
SHOULD HAVE THAT
NOTE BY NOW!



TIM HOLT

AT THAT MOMENT—ON MAIN STREET—REX FURY IS READING A NOTE THAT HAS JUST BEEN THROST INTO HIS HAND...



REX FURY BREAKS INTO A RUN FOR HIS HOTEL...



REX MOUNTS THE STAIRS...



THE GUN WAITS...



Suddenly!



WHEN! THAT WAS CLOSE! THE BOYS DOWNSTAIRS MUST'VE THROWN THEIR BALL THROUGH THE WINDOW. IT HIT THE STRING, TRIGGERING THE GUN... AND THAT'S WHY I'M STILL ALIVE AND BREATHING!



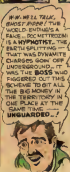
WATER, IN BOB GONG'S LAUNDRY—



FASTER, SPECTRE, FASTER—
TONIGHT WE RIDE TO PREVENT THE WORLD'S ENDING...!









RED RUN THE WATERS!

THE CHIEF, WOLF came down out of the Coyote Hills, sweeping past the grassy knolls of the pine country. There was silence to the south of this wind, for it was the mood of falling leaves, and as it ate its way under his robe, Walking Lance shivered.

He put his pony alone on the rock ledge that started out across the valley. Roman Cheyenne, with the typical long black hair and high cheekbones of his lineage, his hair was bound in two strips of red flannel, for the Cheyennes within the path of war, behind Roman Nose, their atomic chief, his pony a pelted moustang had strips of this same red flannel attached to its usual mane and flowing tail.

"The bluecoats do not come," Walking Lance whispered to the wind. "Long have I waited to sight their rifles, and still they do not appear."

His wariness was heavy in his hand. He shifted it slightly, and his black eyes swept the horizon. For a long time now, his people had left the peace of their white invaders as they came in an endless swarm of wagons across the plains. And as they came, the battle went. The millions of shaggy horses they had swarmed the plains of the Great Divide were only a few, now. The white invaders had done that, with their ruthless killings.

"My people have lived on the flesh and the hide and the bones of the for many centuries," the good warrior told the wind. "The rifle that my children use was carved by my fingers from a buffalo horn. The robe that shelters my back was cut from his hide. He has been put to death on my rifle and legs."

Walking Lance brooded. He could never make the white invaders understand this. They kept their spotted bullets, as the Indians called their shots, in big herds. They made themselves slaves to animals, that they might eat. The warrior made a wry face. Not for him, the tending of animals. Not for him, the work and the art of breeding and caring.

Walking Lance was like the wind. The wind came down from the prairie. Roman said it lay. That man of freedom, the Cheyenne could understand!

The Indian smiled. He turned his head slowly and his eyes — as sharp as those of the eagle — spotted the blue line that where it moved and dipped below the heights to the west of the Coyote Hills.

"Bluecoats!" he whispered. "The bluecoat

soldiers come!"

Now was the time to send his black smoke-plumes swirling upward into the clear sky. Now was the time to advise the great Roman Nose that the bluecoats were heading toward the Arizones.

It was three days later that Walking Lance pulled to his pelted mounting before the tapes of the Cheyenne chief. He slid from his saddle, disdaining to stretch before the glowing eyes of the warriors, went with straight back to the tapes and passed within.

Roman Nose was asked to the west. A great medal hung from his neck on a thick golden chain. His eyes lighted.

"You are welcome, Walking Lance. My scouts saw your signals. My young men trail the invaders."

Walking Lance was blunt. His patients had been tempered too close edge by the long walk on the rock ledges. He asked, "When do we attack? When do we fight the white invaders and slay them all?"

"Soon, my good friend. Under their generals — McGill and Forsyth — they are close by the Republican River, on a fork of that river called the Arizones. Tomorrow — we attack!"

Walking Lance grunted. "The sooner the better. Now they are coming in a great iron horse across the plains! A railroad, they call it. It will bring the white invaders faster and faster. Better to slay them now and stop that iron horse before it gets started!"

The sunlight threw yellow ribbons across the Arizones. It sparkled from the flowing waters, from the cushions of the moss in blue willows who watched the sight of the plains Indians gather against them. There were whole bands in their feathered warbonnets and beaded moccasins, Comanches under their furrowed chief, Comack Parker. Too, the Cheyennes — four fighting men with their cheeks smeared in black and yellow pigments — were gathered behind Roman Nose.

Even a strong array that was to bring Wolf against the hated invaders. And that array moved as one man when Roman Nose lifted his lance and shook it!

They came down from the hills in a flood of dancing horses, with their warriors peeing in their throats. Feathers flared from small

round shields, and from the shafts of their war horses. The air filled with the whiff of flying arrows. The Cheyennes erected their arrows with turkey feathers. The Sioux wrapped their arrowheads to their shafts with the skins of the buffalo. In that manner, each man could tell who died under whose arrow, when the dead bodies were counted.

The bluecoats fell as the arrows hit them. They twisted and writhed on the ground, and the foray came on and hit them, and then rolled away, back to the hills, with the red flannel strips swinging in the breezes as increased haste pounded the ponies into greater speed.

The Indians struck once, hard.

Then they were away, to regroup and charge again.

Walking Lance was in that first mad foray into the tooth of the whirling bullets. He had thrown his spear and watched a bluecoat drop under his point. His club had landed alongside the headless of another trooper.

But the rifles of the bluecoats were cutting down their people! Ah! Those bullets, that went faster than the wildest arrow, could strike again while a Cheyenne or a Comanche was watching his next shall!

"They are few," Walking Lance whispered to the wind that cooled his battle-frenzied face. "But with their carbines, they seem to be as many as the sands of the western deserts!"

Walking Lance regrouped his warriors and took them downlope in another getting going. The bluecoats, with their backs to the waters of the Arkansas, were turning their backs, and fleeing.

"Hassalithyoo!" screamed Walking Lance. "They flee! They flee!"

And then he saw the little island out in the waters of the small river. The bluecoats were running to that island. If they ever reached it, they could hide in those low bushes and shrubs forever!

Walking Lance shouted a warning. The young archers of the tribe heard him, and fitted their shafts to their orangewood bows. They drove their arrows in a murderous rain at the backs of the bluecoat soldiers.

Many soldiers fell, with those warhats protruding upwards from their backs. They lay in the water, and the water turned a dull red as their blood soaked out.

Walking Lance jumped his horse from the bank. He landed between two bluecoats, and his club was a blur of smashing fury.

"Baaay!" he screamed as the soldiers went down under that slashing weapon.

"After them! After them! Do not let them reach the island!"

There was no time to turn, to regroup and charge again in the tight cavalry tactics so beloved by the Plains Indians. Master horsemen

that they were, they knew the way for their painted faces and bodies threw into those who saw them, as they came racing toward their enemies, bent low into the whipping manes of their ponies, their weapons alive as they basted out their enemies and slay them.

"Go on! Go on!" cried Walking Lance, waving his warclub.

The Cheyenne rushed in the bloody waters. A few followed Walking Lance into the deeper waters, seeking their shafts after the man who crashed dripping onto the wooded island. But the others ascended and drove their ponies at the riverbanks, climbing up onto the grassy slopes.

There were three men with Walking Lance as they went out into the river. Young warriors, they were. Red Turtle. Horse Kicking. Dog Under A Tree. They were intelligent, the finest of the Cheyenne people. Perhaps they realized that they were fighting today for a way of life, against an irresistible tide of movement and progress that was sweeping them away before it as Timotee, the wind, came down off the mountains and drove the sand into whirling dunes of power before it.

They charged, and their cries shook the muscles in their throats. Their arrows leaped through the air. Their clubs and axes made a blurring movement as they swung them.

"It is no use!" Walking Lance told the wind that ruffled the water. "My people do not learn new ways! They are not as those white leaders who will try any way of fighting as will be best now!"

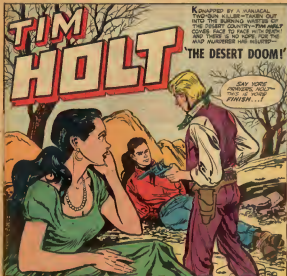
He fought as he talked, with his club raising red death upon the bluecoats as they struggled toward the island.

Behind him, Red Turtle was down, floating limply in the current. Horse Kicking had taken a bullet between his black eyes. Dog Under A Tree jumped a bluecoat, and fingers wrapped in his throat, went under the red river.

Only Walking Lance remained. He stood, browned and grim. His great chest lifting and falling as he gulped air into his lungs. He shook his bloody club above his head and he shouted his warcry, and kicked his pony forward.

He was among the bluecoats, club lifting and falling, when five bullets from the troopers on the island crashed into his chest. He went backward slowly — so slowly it seemed that he had time to think, and this he what he thought. My people are doomed, Nomads and hunters such as we cannot stand before the rush of progress. We fight, but in our hearts we know the battle is lost before it starts. Perhaps it is why we fight as well — knowing that whatever happens, we are as good as dead, already!

Blood red were the waters of the Arkansas as they closed over his head ...



UNDER THE BLAZING ARIZONA SUN IT STANDS — A BIG TANK FILLED WITH WATER.



WATER? MORE VALUABLE THAN GOLD OR DIAMONDS ON THIS SUN-BAKED SECTION OF THE DESERT? WITH-OUT IT, A MAN CANNOT GO ON WITHOUT IT, HE MUST DIE!



TIM HOLT

HERE TO THE WATERBURY. BUILT BY OUR
PIONEER GENTLEMEN, COULD INSURE AND
COUNTRY COMFORTS AND NEW WANTED
BY THE LAW.



AMONG THOSE MEN WHOSE FACES ARE PRINTED ON BERNARD DORRIS
ALL OVER THE TERRITORY IS PUT BURGOT -



MANY MILES SOUTH OF THE BLAZING OVERLAND DESERT ON
THE HOLTS' T-BAR-H RANCH.



TIM HOLT



THE THUMPING OF DOLT'S GUNS DROWNS OUT
EVERYTHING BUT THEIR CELESTIAL THUNDER —



SUDDENLY A BUOYED HILL, LASHES AT THE NEAR
POOR OF THE OTHERS TWO GUNS FLASH IN THE
SUNLIGHT



—SO THAT THE SOFT SHUFFLE OF BOOTS ON
HARDPACKED SAND GOES UNHEARD BY TIM —



TIM HOLT



ALREADY PINNED HIM IN THE SHOULDER, JUST HARD ENOUGH TO KNOCK HIM OUT! AND MAYBE THAT'S JUST AS WELL!



SHAP OUT OF IT, HOLT! YOU GOT TO BE CONSIDERATE ENOUGH TO FORSE A SADDLE! TAIN'T EVERY ONEHOOD THAT CAN HAVE A DEPUTY SHERIFF ALONG AS A HOSTAGE IN CASE THE LAW CATCHES UP WITH ME! SHAP AWAKE...!



CASH IS HERE, ALL RIGHT, JUST LIKE WAS TIPPED OFF IT WOULD BE! RUN WITH ALL THIS CASH FOR ME! INSTEAD OF SPLITTING IT FOUR WAYS—BECKON I'M A PLUMB RICH MAN!



NOW IF I CAN MAKE A CLEAR BETWEEN I'LL TRAVEL NORTH TO TOWN! OR MONTANA, BUY A RANCH, AN SETTLE DOWN—AND I KNOW JUST THE WAY I CAN MAKE SURE OF GETTING AWAY SAFELY!



SOMEWHAT LATER, AT THE DESERT WATER TANK—

YOU—BACK AGAIN?

COME BACK TO GET ANOTHER RIDE JUANITA!



HEY! HEY! LIKE I SAY—YOU'RE ONE PLUMB SWEET GIRL!

WAAAAHOOO!



YESSIR, YOU'RE SO NICE, I AM TO TAKE YOU ALONG WITH ME! YEA CAN DOCTOR UP HOLT'S SHOULDER! I DON'T WANT HIM TO BE ON ME—BEFORE HIS USEFULNESS IS OVER!

TIM HOLT



BUT BEFORE THAT I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE ONE THING THAT WILL LET ME MAKE A QUICK GET-AWAY! NO FORCE CAN FOLLOW ME WITHOUT BATES!



NO! NO! THERE WILL BE NO WATER FOR A WEEK OUT HERE! THE WINDMILL WILL TAKE THAT LONG TO FILL THE TANK—

SURE! IT WILL! THAT'S THE WHOLE IDEA! NOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR GRANDPA!

WITH A SWEEP, FLY BURROF CRASHED OLD PETER FROM HIS BED—



JUST IN CASE THE OLD GENT GETS THE NOTION TO REPAIR IT IN A HURRY— HE CAN'T!



AND NOW, AMIGOS— GALLOP!

ALL NIGHT LONG AND INTO THE BRINKING DAWN, FLY BURROF PUGGED THE PACE ALONG THE WESTERN WINDMILL—

HOLD AFTER HOLD, UNDER THE BROLLING SUN THEY RODE, TIM WITH DEATH AT HIS BACK, AND JUANITA WITH EYES SWAMMED WITH HORROR.



"YOU HE WEEL, AMIG! WHEN WE REACH THE SABER MOUNTAINS, FOR ONCE BEYOND THAT HE WEEL BE SAFE!" HE SPOKE. "HE WEEL TAKE DEATH NOW!"



AS DUSK THROWS A MANTLE OVER THE BADLANDS—

"LIGHT DOWN, FOUR! ENJOY YOUR MEAL TONIGHT, HOLT! COME DAWN I PUT A BULLET THROUGH YOU!"

TIM HOLT

SOON A FIRE IS BLAZING ON THE ROCK FLAT AND JUANITA STOOFS TO COOK A MEAL.



"GUREN! I GOT A FORTUNE IN MY SADDLEBAGS— AN' A PRETTY GAL TO KEEP ME COMPANY ON THE LONG RIDE NORTH!"

"I'M FEELIN' PLUM GOOD."

"POORCO—
AID!"

"HERE, EAT YOUR FOOD! I WILL FEED YOU TO YOUR SKELETS AS 'POORCO' OVER THERE WILL NOT LOOSEN YOUR BONDS..."



WITH MANY MUTTERINGS AND HEAD SHAKINGS, JUANITA HELPS TIM EAT, WHEN SHE FINES TO LEAVE, ONE OF HER SADDONS DROPS TO THE GROUND.



"THAT SADDON IS PRETTY SHAPLY! IF I CAN GET MY HANDS ON IT..."



SLOWLY THE NIGHT HOURS WEAR ON. SLEEPLESS, TIM WORKS HIS FINGERS BACK AND FORTH, STRAIN BY STRAIN THE ROPES, GIVE UNDER THE SLAMING EDGE OF THE TINY CRESCENT—



AS DAWN TINTS THE ROCKY BouldERS OF THE SADDON'S...

WITH A QUICK WRENCH OF NUMBER MUSCLES, TIM BREAKS THE REMAINING STRAINS OF HIS BONDS— AND LEAPS!

"SUN'S COMING UP! TIME FOR TWO OF US TO EDE ON! HOLT— I'M LEAVING YOU HERE!—GRAB!"



"LEAVE YOU—BUT LOOSE ...!"



TIM HOLT



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